

# The State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition

## Response to Latest Demands by Governor Rell's Budget Chief: "A Phony Prescription for Connecticut's Economic Illness"

State Employees Bargaining Agent Coalition (SEBAC) leaders reacted with condemnation after receiving a letter on Thursday night from Governor M. Jodi Rell's Office of Policy and Management (OPM) Secretary asking that the unions respond to a list of further concession demands. Robert Genuario stated in the letter that, while the 2009 agreement with SEBAC represented "considerable budget savings," the Rell Administration would be asking each union in the Coalition to make additional changes to their agreements and to the overall health and retirement agreement not scheduled to expire until 2017.

Last year, SEBAC members agreed to about three quarters of a billion dollars in savings to help offset the budget deficits for the previous and current fiscal years. This year, SEBAC leadership presented the Administration its ["Jobs For Every Working Family Proposal"](#) which, along with ideas for jump starting Connecticut's ailing economy, included proposals to involve frontline workers in creating efficiencies in order to meet the ever growing demand for public services in down economic times.

In a letter replying directly to Governor Rell, SEBAC leadership makes clear that the Administration's recent proposals were neither a good faith effort to initiate dialog, nor even a genuine effort to produce savings. Leaders tell the governor:

*Less than a year ago, although we came from very different places, you acted honorably in reaching an agreement with us that your administration has frequently touted, and which provided nearly three quarters of a billion dollars in savings just when the State needed it the most. Today, you are pandering to the partisan politics of the gubernatorial campaign in making proposals that show a cynical disrespect not just for Connecticut's 45,000 public service workers but for all of Connecticut's struggling working families.*

Union leaders call the proposals "a cynical effort to distract the public from [Governor Rell's] constant choice of the 5% who are super rich over the 95% who are suffering." Noting that Connecticut needs a jobs program "that matches the scale of the terrible problems facing our people and communities," leaders tell the governor unequivocally:

*You cannot deliver that program, because of a your relentless refusal to ask the Wall Street bankers and other millionaires -- some of whom caused the very recession from which the rest of us still suffer -- to pay their fair share.*

SEBAC leaders warned the governor in February of 2009 that a budget premised mostly on cuts would stall Connecticut's economic recovery. State budget cuts last year are predicted to increase private sector job losses by another 50,000 workers on top of the 101,000 jobs Connecticut's already lost from the recession, and union leaders make their response to this supposed effort to restart negotiations abundantly clear:

*We will not join you, Governor Rell, in leading Connecticut on a mad race to the bottom, a race which that benefits only the very privileged few. Instead, we will continue fighting for a Connecticut that works, a Connecticut which provides good jobs with living wages, affordable health care, and a dignified retirement to all of its hard working people.*

[January 28 SEBAC "Jobs For Every Working Family Proposal"](#)

**[March 18 Letter to SEBAC from Sec. Robert Genuario](#)**

**[March 21 Response to Governor Rell from SEBAC Leaders](#)**

To learn more about SEBAC's campaign for a fair budget and a livable state with great public services visit <http://www.InThisTogetherCT.org>.